

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 283 814

SP 029 017

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TITLE When Should Faculty Development Become Midcareer Change? (An Analysis of Options for Schools of Education).
PUB DATE Jul 87
NOTE 16p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Change; *Early Retirement; Economic Factors; *Faculty Development; Higher Education; Middle Aged Adults; *Midlife Transitions; Schools of Education; Teaching (Occupation)

ABSTRACT

This monograph summarizes four demographic influences for retaining faculty vitality. Since these demographic trends provide only a partial analysis, seven conclusions are presented to support the contention that faculty development is not likely to occur in most institutions. The argument over whether faculty are, or are not, like other professionals concludes with nine assertions to support the contention that faculty are more similar than dissimilar to other professionals. A review of faculty development studies is presented. Issues which are addressed include: What are model career patterns? Are there various faculty constituencies which are addressed? What do faculty themselves propose? Can a functional reward system or real faculty development be built into institutions? The monograph concludes by offering five incentives to midcareer change and early retirement. (Author)

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ED283814

When Should Faculty Development Become Midcareer Change?
(An Analysis of Options for Schools of Education)

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July, 1987

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"Boredom ... should not be mistaken for lethargy.
Boredom is energy frustrated of outlet."

Thornton Wilder

The term "faculty development" is a handy euphemism. Administrators use it when they mean getting people they regard as unproductive to do more, better, or different things. Faculty members frequently use the term in place of saying they have a reduced load to get ready to do something else, or they have extra resources to do something they value.

But what are the real rather than the perceived issues of faculty development? The trends that are most closely linked to faculty vitality and development begin with demographic conclusions such as the following:

1. The economic conditions surrounding higher education for the rest of the 1980s and the early 1990s are bleak, with the result that there will be relatively little hiring of new PhDs even though the supply of new PhD holders will be more than adequate.
2. The faculties of institutions will "age," and the larger proportions of faculty members will push beyond age 50 and beyond age 60. This situation has become marginally worse with the expiration in 1982 of the exemption for tenured faculty members from the 1978 amendments to the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. If the age of mandatory retirement is eliminated, aging will take place at an even more rapid rate, but its exact extent cannot be pinpointed because we know little about how faculty members would respond to such a situation.
3. The effect of this aging will be to raise salary and hence institutional costs faster than would otherwise have been the case, thereby increasing the already intense financial pressures on the higher education sector.

4. The "graying" of college faculties can be offset, at least potentially by developing effective early retirement incentive programs and midcareer change programs, by recasting the salary structure, and by invoking more rigorous tenure quotas. The creation of new federally subsidized research positions seems rather unlikely. And the stimulation of new demand will require considerable effort (Hansen, 1986).

Hansen argues most convincingly that public universities are not free to simply respond to demographic trends. State laws, bargaining contracts, and lack of funds are intervening factors. Lack of "know-how," however, may be the biggest obstacle to faculty development programs.

But Hansen is not alone in his conclusions. Others who have engaged in systematic study reach similar conclusions.

- Renewal will not be accomplished by the pattern of the recent past where faculty members (at least a significant portion of them) "played the market" and moved to institutions that provided better matches for their needs and characteristics, and where the expansion of the professoriate enabled many newly trained doctorates to find their places and refresh or rejuvenate the academic specialties of departments, or even to establish new specialties of recent origin (Clark, Corcoran, 1986).
- Promising young and/or recently trained doctorates will not find the opportunity structure open to them and they will either choose to accept marginal faculty roles in the nonladder and nontenure ranks in which the new doctorate faculty will "churn" in and out of academe or they will seek alternative nonacademic employment. A "lost generation" of scholars may result in a loss in scientific discoveries which may have broad social and possibly economic impact (Linnell, 1979).
- Promising female and/or minority doctorates will find the opportunity structure nearly impenetrable at a time when, ironically, a national policy is in place to encourage affirmative action and equal employment opportunity for heretofore excluded sex, racial and ethnic categories (Newman, 1979).

- Although there are creative and productive faculty in their 60s, 70s, and 80s, the prevailing view and much of the research evidence (cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, however) suggests that older faculty members, especially those who are beyond 60 or 65, are less productive in their research output and, therefore, less "vital" than younger ones (Reskin, 1979).
- Generational differences between faculty and students will be exacerbated as average age discrepancies increase. These may be associated with problems of effectiveness as teachers and as research mentors, for the life experiences of the different age cohorts in the historical dimension of the social process are bound to be different (Bess, 1973).
- The opportunity structure for faculty, consisting of a very short ladder of statuses, a relatively flat salary curve, and limited possibilities of obtaining significant administrative positions may result in feelings of being "stuck" versus feelings of "moving" or "progressing" in their careers.
- Responses to "stuckness" may be lowered self-esteem, disengagement from work, resistance to change and innovation, and disposition to unionize (Kanter, 1979).

Obviously, these assertions are a mixture of data, experience and opinion. It is also necessary to remind ourselves that faculty are a diverse multiplicity of constituencies and not a homogenous group. In truth,

"We know little of variations in role behavior and preferences of faculty members over the career life span, by institutional type, by sex, and by discipline. Institutional "management" of faculty careers in the form of interventions such as mentoring and sponsorship of research activities to boost productivity, consultation relative to the improvements of teaching, midcareer assessment and transition assistance, and preretirement planning would benefit from a broader knowledge base (Clark, Corcoran, 114).

There seems to be some consensus around the paradoxical position that universities should do more but that they can't. Real

and perceived constraints serve as a pall.

The process of planning university initiatives usually begins with the same tired question: Are faculty members unique in their concerns regarding midcareer change?

"In the work academics do, no single element sets them apart from other professionals. They are not the only ones who teach, or who teach college age students, or who teach physics, or who do research on economic depressions and recessions. Nor are they the only ones who are organized into departments dealing with a single area of study or interest, or even the only professionals employed by a college or university. Their identity as a faculty is a combination of these and other factors. Nor, further, are they a breed apart in their styles of living, their interests in recreation, their tastes in reading, the number of their marriages, divorces and children. Nor are they a separate breed in their response to working opportunities or the lack of them, or in their ability to work with enthusiasm or sag in discouragement. Therefore, they are unlikely to be either more prone to disturbances in their development as adults than others, or more immune.

(Furniss, 1981)

The argument for uniqueness usually cites the special condition of working in a tenure system. This is a valid distinction when comparing faculty with professionals in the private sector. It is less valid when comparing faculty with practitioners in human service professions, in the nonprofit sector, or in government. The literature in higher education most commonly supports the position that academic careers play out in the same general patterns as other professional careers in American society. Widespread acceptance of the need for career-long renewal, dealing with burnout, midcareer slumps, the displaced executive, various

plans for revitalization--including early retirement, all support the notion that we are seeking solutions to problems faced by all professionals. Descriptions and analyses of professional careers as having clearly delineated stages are being generated in a wide array of professions.

The fact that we can apply concepts from adult and career development stage theories to faculty facilitates our analyses. We can also apply concepts from sociology, psychology, and organizational science to ways of understanding what controls faculty productivity. The nine assertions which follow would be equally valid if we substituted the word "professionals" for faculty.

1. The productivity of faculty over an entire career is predictable.
2. The institution determines to a high degree a faculty member's productivity.
3. Organizational factors influence faculty productivity.
4. How time is structured affects productivity.
5. Faculty interests and desires for different types of work change over the academic career.
6. Age is not a predictor of productivity over a career path.
7. Mentorship/sponsorship in the first year is critical for launching a productive career.
8. Faculty productivity over a career is affected by security and by challenge (competition).
9. Rewards affect faculty performance, and intrinsic rewards dominate extrinsic ones. (Blackburn, 1979)

Assertions #1 and #6 are not opposites. #6 is summarizing studies in a variety of disciplines that show that faculty who publish or do research when they are young continue or even accelerate their productivity and that these production curves vary by discipline. #1 asserts that faculty interests and values may

change in predictable (not necessarily negative) ways. #2 recognizes the fact that the university setting defines success. Individuals who are "average" in one institutional setting may be superior in another. As teaching or writing or research expectations change, so do the organizational values placed on individuals who perform these activities. "Institutional setting" refers not only to administrators but to students, other faculty, alumni and the expectations of that particular institutional community. #3 refers to the structure of schools, departments, committees, and all the organizational mechanisms that influence and determine the status and role of particular faculty. #4 deals with issues such as, What constitutes a load of work? Who controls the individual faculty member's time? #5 refers to burnout. #7 refers to induction. University work may be the all-time worst example of applying what is known about inducting beginners into professional work groups. #8 and #9 refer to striking a balance in any practitioner's life between security and newness, between self and others.

In an effort to gain more base line data regarding present practices, Centra surveyed 45 practices used in 756 institutions (Centra, 1986). The resulting factors or groups of practices were then related to additional information including the number of faculty involved, how activities were funded and organized, and institutional characteristics such as size, type and source of

control. Centra grouped developmental practices into four categories: high faculty involvement practices (e.g., workshops on institutional goals); instructional assistance practices (e.g., specialists to assist in course development); traditional practices (e.g., visiting scholars); and assessment practices (e.g., tenure review).

Over 40 percent of the institutions had some kind of unit; often a director or coordinator. Most of these had only been in existence for a year or two and had never been evaluated.

One of Centra's most noteworthy findings includes some support for commonly held assertions: since developmental functions are voluntary, the faculty who seek them most need them less (the younger and the better teachers participated more frequently than those who really needed to improve); and teacher effectiveness declined after about twelve years.

As do most others, Centra reaches somewhat less than optimistic conclusions.

If maintaining faculty vitality is a critical goal for institutions, then faculty burnout is a clear symptom that we are falling short of achieving that goal. What then? In this paper I have argued that faculty development activities, in their broadest sense, can help keep a faculty vital. But given the current financial picture generally, can institutions be expected to spend money on these activities? Would not faculty members themselves rather see reductions in faculty development programs than in faculty positions? Would not many teachers prefer higher salaries to renewal programs if given the choice? Unfortunately, decisions increasingly being forced on institutions are of a "no-win" type. Not tending to the well-being of a university staff--and this

includes adequate salaries as well as adequate opportunities for renewal--is shortsighted. Diminishing the vitality of a staff in this way critically affects the quality of an institution, maybe not today or tomorrow, but eventually. (Centra, p. 115-116)

If we assume that Blackburn's nine points of what controls faculty productivity (cited above) are even partially correct, then what implementation questions need to be raised by a particular institution considering a faculty development program?

What do model career patterns look like in this institution? While we do not know enough about the specific stages of career development through which faculty members pass, their attitudes and behaviors do go through at least three transformations. The pretenure stage, the early tenure years and the mature years all require different institutional responses.

What are the faculty constituencies to be addressed? No one program will work for all faculty. There are individual differences as well as variations in the stage and quality of faculty members' careers. In addition, various groups (e.g., women, minorities, the unionized) all have divergent agendas. Several approaches, rather than the perfect program for all, seems called for.

What do faculty themselves propose doing? The initiatives and proposals of faculty should be the main source of ideas. Administrators should primarily facilitate. Programs should be shaped by a process of bubble up rather than trickle down.

What support might be generated for faculty proposals?

Informal ways of involving small groups of faculty in developing and participating in programs are frequently more influential than formal means. Faculty can have great influence on each other--particularly in informal support groups.

How can faculty development be built into the institution rather than be treated as something special? Faculty in general do not appreciate using limited university funds to initiate counseling or faculty development programs. Existing resources on and off campus should be utilized.

How can reward system and productivity measures be made compatible with faculty proposals? Faculty dialogues as well as discussions with administrators regarding institutional constraints to faculty development should be encouraged. Useful proposals and revisions to proposals are frequently generated by this process.

Ultimately, some point will be reached when an institution has made a good faith effort to provide facilitating conditions for faculty development but can do no more.

Who is ultimately responsible?

"The faculty member whose career is unsatisfactory must work out a solution outside academia if it can't be accomplished inside. The problems are personal, unique and only tangentially the institution's business. An institutional program exploring other career options is likely to be expensive, may do little good, and may expose the institution to legal liability if a faculty member is damaged while following recommendations of the program. On the other hand, the institution has a stake in the faculty's performance. If faculty members perform

badly because of conditions that the institution can help correct, it should correct them. Furthermore, in some instances the changes can be brought about only by institutional action, or external action simulated by the institution or another agency (for example, a pension fund). Finally, faculty members may lack the knowledge or the leverage to initiate changes that will be beneficial."
(Furniss, 1981)

The institution can offer options and create conditions which encourage faculty to select from among them. Leadership is the process of helping people take action in their own behalf. But just as the faculty member is credited for completing his doctoral program in the first place, he must bear the responsibility for his continued development thereafter.

Midcareer Change and Early Retirement

To whom does a career shift appeal? Several studies have found that "The least active researchers and writers would be happier outside academe... Academics who rate themselves as less successful than their colleagues have considered leaving." (Palmer, Patton, 1981) Career change options which institutions might consider include retraining for outplacement, a paid retraining leave--severance option, and offering an earnings supplement. This third option involves "... the university or college guaranteeing up to 100 percent of the career changer's salary for the first year, up to 75 percent for the second year, and up to 50 percent for the third year." (Patton, 1983) Such schemes are designed to ease the faculty member into a new position which pays less, or to encourage the faculty member to risk seeking an entirely new position.

Obviously, most career change options are usually advanced to encourage younger people to leave academe. These schemes are an expansion of the inducements which already operate on the more marketable faculty within any institution. Of greater interest are policies and practices which encourage older faculty to seek early retirement. Patton has summarized the five basic incentives for early retirement as:

1. Liberalizing the actuarial reduction, i.e., not fully reducing the early retiree's pension to compensate for the lesser amount paid in and the longer period during which benefits will be received.
 2. Lump sum severance payments typically equal to one or two year's salary can be paid in a lump sum or spread over one or two years.
 3. Annuity enhancements increase the amount the faculty member would receive by waiting until the normal retirement age.
 4. Phased retirement takes the form of a reduced workload on a part-time basis after the faculty member retires for one or more years.
 5. Perquisites include offices, access to laboratories, and other university facilities, (e.g., computers) and continuing memberships in the university library, theater clubs, etc. (Patton, 1983, p. 45-47)
- The percentage of faculty who have considered, or would

consider, midcareer changes or early retirement will be affected by the faculty member's particular field of expertise, work experience, the benefits s/he has built up in a particular retirement fund and his/her prognosis of the future. There are, of course, a multitude of idiosyncratic factors which can be added to these more general ones: family-marital status; physical disabilities; the mortgage rates on homes, etc. It is possible that the greatest proportion of the variance among factors used to explain faculty career change is

unexplained; that is, the hypotheses usually advanced to explain what induces faculty to leave are not as inclusive or as "common sense" as many might believe. There is no question that further study is required and that such study should seek to specify, in greater detail, the nature of the institution and the characteristics of the faculty who may be retrained or retired.

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